BALLET TODAY

1/-

MAY 1953

CYRIL BEAUMONT
In Stockholm
Swan Lake
And Sylphides
Televised

★

MARKOVA
On My Favourite Role

★

NEWS

★

REVIEWS

Photo: Felix Fonteyn

A recent portrait of Margot Fonteyn in her new flat.

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EDITORIAL

THIS has been an eventful month for ballet. We have had no fewer than five ballerinas at Covent Garden at one and the same time; we have welcomed Margot Fonteyn back again after her long illness—it was a breathless moment when we watched her flashing across the stage in *Apparitions* in her black glittering cobweb dress, for all the world like a splinter of jet. After the curtain she stood upon a stage covered in flowers from one side to the other, and after so many curtain calls that we lost count, she made a graceful little speech of thanks, protesting with characteristic modesty that she did not deserve it all. We have our own ideas about that.

Then we have had the joy of watching Markova again, in *Les Sylphides* and *Giselle* — and she gave up some of her rare leisure time to talk about *Giselle* to Barbara Wace for the benefit of readers of " Ballet Today." Some people say that Time has robbed Markova of elevation, speed, brilliance and so forth. We have long held that, on the contrary, she has " lost " nothing, but that she has discarded attributes she no longer needs, as a butterfly sheds its pupal skin in order to emerge in full glory, and that she has attained the simplification which is the essence of great art. From her own lips we know now that we were right.

* * *

Dame Ninette de Valois, in a most stimulating lecture at Caxton Hall, recently spoke of the great new public for ballet among young people in the provinces, and urged the ballet public to criticise ballet more. She has unbounded faith in the public for, she says, while people do not always know what they want they will always appreciate a really fine work.

She could not resist a dig at those critics who pretend that anything popular cannot be good, saying that she had never found failures particularly glorious, however much they might appeal to the self-elected intelligentsia. " Ballet Today " heartily agrees with Dame Ninette. Art that is comprehensible only to the few is nearly always bad art.

BERYL GREY and John Field scored a brilliant success at the Royal Opera House, Stockholm, on March 21st and 22nd. They danced *Les Sylphides, Variations* and the *Grand pas de Deux* from *The Sleeping Beauty,* and on the following night in *Swan Lake.*

Dagens Nyheter: " Beryl Grey is tall for a dancer, but her body has exquisite proportions and she has those long and beautiful lines that the English try to achieve. All her movements are accentuated because they are enlarged, but like Margot Fonteyn she dances with absolute purity of line and never allows herself any trace of excess. She has a noble style of dancing and yet without severity or coldness."

Svenska Dagbladet: " Beryl Grey, the English guest, is not only a head higher than her Swedish colleagues figuratively but also technically, and together with her perfect partner, John Field, she danced herself to a most unusual success."

Expressen: " Beryl Grey and John Field are both typical products of the Anglo-Russian ' school of iron-hard discipline. And what products! She is absolutely supreme, Queen of beautiful lines, he more impulsive with interpretive power seldom seen in *Prince Siegfried's* rather diffuse role . . . In the Royal box Queen Louise was seen to stay behind and applaud until the tenth curtain call.

DOROTHY PRATT.

A stage picture of " The Shadow," one-act ballet with music by Dohnanyi, choreography by John Cranko, decor by John Piper, recently presented at Covent Garden by the Sadlers Wells Ballet. A dark shadow separates a youth from his Romantic Love, and becomes more and more menacing until challenged, when it is found, like all shadows, to have no substance. Though slight this ballet is of great charm, and is distinguished by the limpid grace of Svetlana Beriosova as the Romantic Love and by the poetic feeling of Philip Chatfield as the Youth.

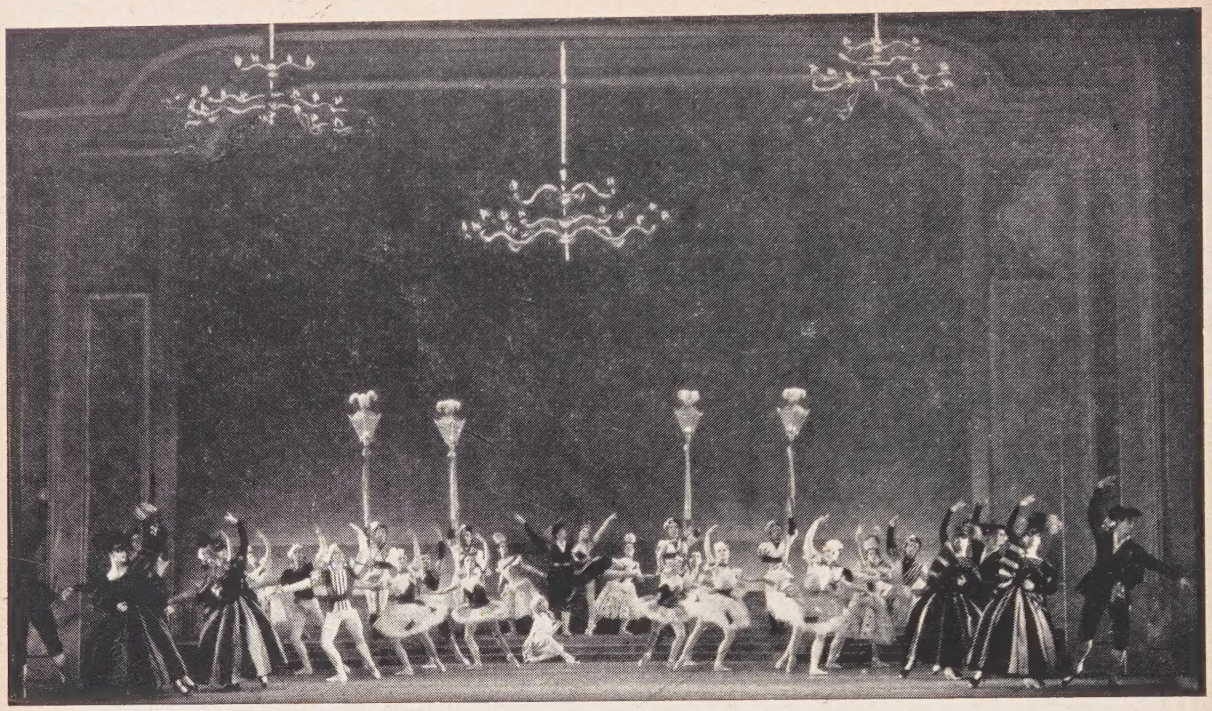


Photo: Baron

Veneziana

THE name of Venice conjures up in one's mind all kinds of visions —of gondolas gliding dreamily down the Grand Canal, of moonlight in the Piazza of St. Mark's, of mysterious masked figures in tricornes and dominos leaning over marble balustrades, of lanterns trailing tinsel ribbons of light through waters of jet, of whispered intrigues and muffled laughter—and of the thousand delights and kaleidoscopic gaiety of the Carnival.

It is this spirt that ANDREE HOWARD and SOPHIE FEDOROVITCH have set out to capture and bring to us in terms of ballet at Covent Garden. *Veneziana* is set to the glittering melodies of DONIZETTI, culled by DENIS APIVOR from *La Favorita, Parisina* and other operas. No more intoxicating ballet music could be devised, glittering like the sunshine on the lagoon, heady as wine and brilliant at the *coloratura* arias in which Donizetti's works abound.

ANDREE HOWARD is a choreographer of many-sided talent. She has a strong sense of drama and of the supernatural and macabre; she also has an elusive, delicate poetry, fluent invention and a puckish humour. It is these lighter qualities which *Veneziana* has called into play, while SOPHIE FEDOROVITCH—whose recent death is a tragedy for everyone connected with ballet—has designed costumes of an effervescent gaiety and brilliant colour to set against a velvety night sky and the deep blue of the lagoon. Black, white, crimson, red, blue, orange, mimosa-yellow—it is a dazzling display. If at first one was surprised to see mediæval gentlemen rubbing shoulders with Cavaliers of classical ballet, and Venetians from the pictures of Pietro Longhi dancing with ballerinas in every kind of *tutu*, the Carnival spirit resolved all the apparent incongruities; and anyway it was all so exciting to see. *Masked Ladies, Cavaliers, Tarantella Dancers, Lovers, Harlequins* and *Columbines* whirl in a brilliant succession of dances before our eyes. There is a particularly spirited *Punchinello* in RAY POWELL, whose solo has a touch of the grotesque that lends an additional air of fantasy to the whole—if more were needed—and the *Harlequins* (BRIAN SHAW and PETER CLEGG) and *Columbines* (PAULINE CLAYDEN and ROWENA JACKSON) have brilliant *pas* which they exploit to the full.

All this ebullience leads to the entry of VIOLETTA ELVIN magnificent and glittering with diamonds as *La Favorita*. She performs a majestic *adage*, and then receives the homage of no less than five masked cavaliers. The fickle beauty favours them, however, with no more than a few lifts and supported turns, though they far surpass even Sir Walter Raleigh in gallantry and assiduity. He merely sacrificed his cloak to protect regal feet from contact with rude earth, while they lie on the ground and positively beg to be trampled on by the reigning beauty. Here we have to confess a slight disappointment since *La Favorita*, besides appearing rather late in the proceedings, is not given sufficient opportunity to display her art, and we feel that her splendour is largely wasted. However, a gondola burdened with youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm soon drifts by to make us forget our momentary disillusionment; and *Veneziana* ends in a blaze of triumph and splendour not merely once, but, for full measure, twice. It surges up to a breathless climax, subsides again then surges up once more for the final curtain and the applause which has been itching on the palms of our hands for ten minutes past.

DOROTHY PRATT.

BALLETS JOOSS AT SADLERS WELLS

WE have had an opportunity of renewing acquaintance with the Ballets Jooss after an interval of six years, during which it seems that we and they have been travelling along diverging paths. KURT JOOSS, in returning in body to Essen to re-form his company in its original surroundings, seems at the same time to have returned in spirit to the nineteen-thirties. We ourselves, having lived through the nineteen-thirties and survived the nineteen-forties, are now grappling with the nineteen-fifties.

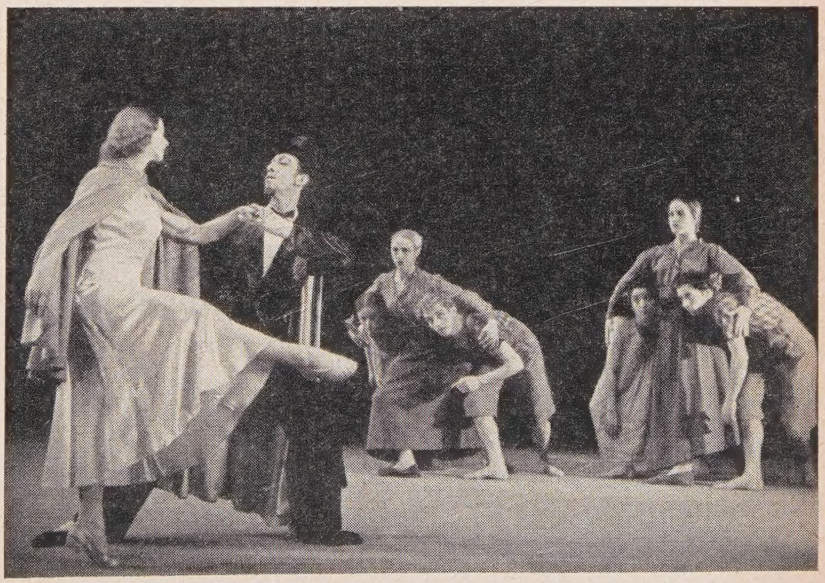
It is startling to find that we have parted company with so old a friend and admired an artist as KURT JOOSS; but there is no doubt that his productions, new as well as old, wear an out-of-date air. They are stamped with the leaden hopelessness and cynicism that we associate with the period between the wars. His two masterpieces, *The Green Table* and *The Big City* are still masterpieces—but they are now period-pieces. *The Green Table* is still a terrifying indictment of the futility of war. As a work of art it has lost none of its impressiveness, while ROLF ALEXANDER is a worthy inheritor of the role of *Death* at which we so often marvelled when Jooss himself played it. But it has fallen to us to make the discovery that war is not the ultimate horror. The horrors of the disintegration of the spirit are deeper still. Mr. Jooss has lightly sketched some of them in his new ballet *Journey in the Fog*. This deals with the sufferings of the exile, the prisoner and the bereaved and, had it been successful, might have inherited the mantle of topicality worn so long and triumphantly by *The Green Table*. But it does not "come off." Grey-clad figures gesticulate and agonise singly and in groups until we are as completely befogged as the title, and our withers are no longer capable of being wrung by such exhibitions of self-pity. These were all very well in the dismal nineteen-thirties, but in the tough and exhilarating nineteen-fifties they make us impatient, or even ribald.

The Big City, with its brilliant use of a cinematic technique, wears by far the best. Puppet-like caricatures of city types float endlessly before the eyes as on a cinema-screen, while the lantern jaw and square solid movements of the virtuous *Workman* contrast with the top-hatted, ingratiating *Libertine* who represents Capitalistic Vice. It is true that in our rapidly-changing society we have found that all Workmen are not pillars of virtue, nor Capitalists all monsters of iniquity, and perhaps that is why a ripple of laughter runs round the theatre at the sight of the grim-grey-clad *Mothers* who come to rescue their rather repulsive offspring from contamination at the sight of a capitalist in dress clothes; but *The Big City* still enthrals us, and we are as fascinated as ever at the change of scene from the expensive dance-hall to the cheap one achieved by a cinematic "fade-out." The Charleston-dancing plutocrats are suddenly replaced by capped workmen dancing with their girls, one cannot quite see how. This is a stroke of genius.

It is in the realm of the abstract, depending for its effect on pure dancing, that the weakness of the Jooss idiom is seen. The Jooss-LABAN school aims at direct dramatic expression in terms of the dance, while classical ballet evokes mood and atmosphere through line and movement whose nature is essentially unrealistic. The difference between the two is like the difference between the vivd prose of journalism and the incandescence of poetry. Journalism can rank as literature—one has only to think of the music criticism of Bernard Shaw or the ballet criticism of Gautier—just as *The Big City* and *The Green Table* are classics in their particular kind. But they are journalistics of ballet, deriving their effect from simple, clear-cut ideas placed in the strongest possible contrast with one another and expressed in broad and direct terms. In *The Green Table*, the grotesque masks and feverish gesticulations of the statesmen contrast with the grim strides and inexorable, angular movements of *Death*, as he gathers in young and old, soldier, maid and old woman; but ballets like HANS ZULLIG'S *Le Bosquet*, a pastoral set to music by RAMEAU and the same choreographer's *Fantasy* to music by SCHUBERT, achieve no more than a mild charm. The prosaic nature of the Jooss idiom cannot rise to heights of poetry. *Colombinade*, the Jooss equivalent of Fokine's *Carnaval*, could not survive the costumes, which are of an unbelievable hideosity, even if the dance-idiom were capable of expressing wit or fantasy, which it is not.

KURT JOOSS has always been especially interested in the expression of moral and sociological themes, and his greatest triumphs have been of this kind. Satire is his most potent weapon. On his next visit we hope he will hold his satirical mirror up to some of the follies, cranks and nostrums of our day, for therein lies his genius. We hope too that he will decide to abolish forever his black curtains, which absorb the light, and take the colour out of the costume.

DOROTHY PRATT.



The young Girl is enticed away by the Libertine, watched by Working Mothers and Children. (Ulla Soderbaum and Alfonso Unanue in "The Big City".)
Photo: Derek Allen

SWAN LAKE IN STOCKHOLM

New ideas in production

THE recent revival of *Swan Lake* at Covent Garden has deservedly aroused such interest that lovers of that ballet may welcome some details of the recent full length production by the Swedish Ballet at the Royal Opera, Stockholm, which had its *première* on March 12. Mary Skeaping, formerly *maîtresse de ballet* to the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden, was responsible for the revival, the choreography being based on the version recorded by the late Nicholas Sergeyev after that in the repertory of the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg. The settings and costumes were by Sven Erik Skawonius. The conductor was Bertil Bokstedt.

* * *

ACT I (Pl. 1). The background is formed by a raised crenellated wall in a warm brick red, with steps leading into the garden; the whole set against a sky cyclorama. Before the wall are slender poles tipped with pennons flying in the breeze. To the right are castle turrets, and, down-stage, a dais with table and chair, shaded by a royal blue canopy, the chains twined with garlands, the back bearing a heraldic device. To the left is a red barrel of beer, with table, mugs and stools for the villagers. The *Prince* and his companions are in grey doublet and hose with feathered bonnet. The peasants' costumes each differ slightly in colour, the girls having charming linen caps with braids at sides and bows on top.

Act I includes a lyrical *Pas de Six* based on that arranged by Ivanov, at the end of which the peasants wave handkerchiefs and birch twigs in token of rejoicing. Then follows the entrance of the *Princess Mother*, the *Pas de Trois* and Dance of the *Tutor* and *Peasant Girl*. The *Tutor* is linked with the villagers in that he is seen previously coaching them how to present their flowers and their dances.

In the peasant *ensemble* (Pl. 3) there are two girls to each boy and, at the finale, the girls form a circle holding hands, when the *Prince*'s friends raise their cups to suggest a drinking song. Then, in the fading light, each waltzes with a girl towards the steps, when the boys arrive with torches and the girls go on their way home. The flight of swans is shown on the cyclorama. The swans emerge from behind the turret in a V-shaped formation and cross the sky in a downward flight.

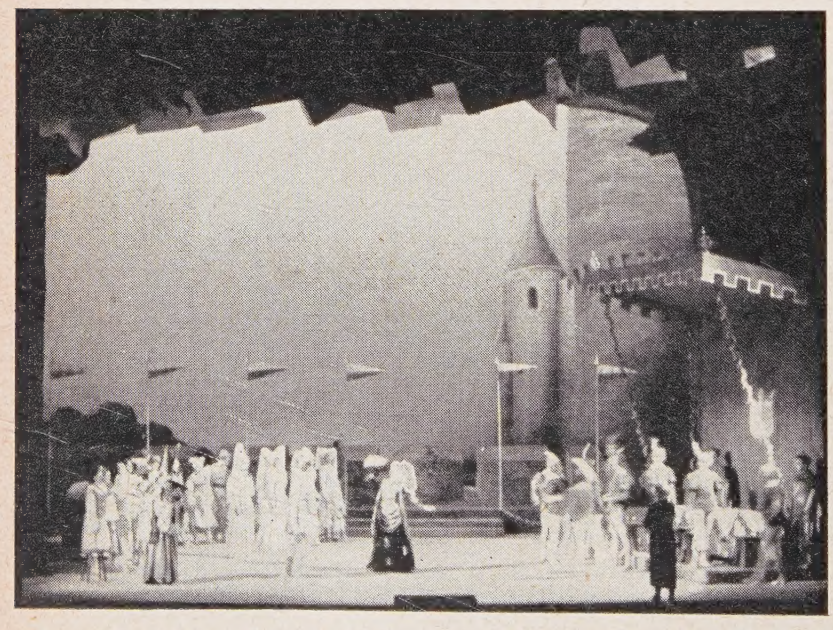
* * *

ACT II. This opens with a group of mechanical swans — some with curved necks, some with straight — gliding across the lake from left to right. *Rothbart*'s entrance is heralded by the appearance of a mechanical owl with gleaming eyes which appears between the two branches of the broken tree (Pl. 2). to vanish just before the enchanter enters. The choreography follows the usual plan.

* * *

ACT III. This, I am told, is very effective. It is lighted by a beam of moonlight passing through the archway leading to the castle grounds. (Unfortunately the photograph, Pl. 6, taken from a box, has cut off much of the vaulted roof.) At curtain rise the *Master of Ceremonies* and two servants are on stage. The latter light the torches set before each column, then bow and exit. The *Master of Ceremonies* greets the guests, a page announces the arrival of the *Princess Mother* and the *Prince*, who enter preceded by four pages while another page plays a fanfare. Then come the *Would-Be Brides*, here called *Princesses*, each *Princess* followed by her retinue of dancers—first, a *Hungarian Princess* followed by five pairs of dancers, then two *Spanish Princesses* followed by dancers, next two *Italian Princesses* (one from Naples and one from Florence) followed by Neapolitan dancers, and finally a *Polish Princess* followed by dancers. The costume of each *Princess* is related to that of her retinue, but her dress is long and of light material suitable for waltzing. Each *Princess* is also given a little *variation sur les pointes*, based on the national steps of her country. The order of the dances is: Polish, two Italian, two Spanish, one Hungarian, the dances so arranged that the *Prince* waltzes with the *Princesses* after they conclude their variations (Pl. 10).

When *Siegfried* has rejected the *Princesses*, the character dances are introduced by the *Master of Ceremonies*, the *Prince* sitting on his throne with an indifferent air which troubles his mother. There is a fanfare followed by the dramatic entrance of *Rothbart* and *Odile*, preceded by the sight of two owls flying across the sky cyclorama. Then comes the *Grand Pas de Deux* of *Odile* and *Siegfried*. *Odile* is dressed in black, but an attempt has been made to show that she is not the *Odette* she appears to be by making her present a tender expression towards the *Prince* and a dif-



1. Setting for Act I. The castle is warm red, the hanging flags red and yellow, the dais rich blue. Note the barrel of beer for the peasants extreme left—and Miss Skeaping on stage directing the rehearsal!

3. Act I. Dance of the peasants.

2 The mechanical owl, whose appearance heralds that of Rothbart in Act II.

(Photos by *Merkel Rydberg, Stockholm*)

4. Act II. Odette pleads with Rothbart, the owl-magician. (Orlando and Algo)

5. Act II. Odette and Prince Siegfried. (Orlando and Rhodin)

8. Act III. Odile and Rothbart. (Von Rosen and Algo)

6. Setting for Act III.

9 Act. III. When the Prince pledge his troth to Odile, she and Rothbart turn into owls.

7. Act III. Rhodin as Prince Siegfried.

10. The Princesses. Back row, l. to r.—Basque, Neapolitan, Spanish. Front row, l. to r.—Florentine, Hungarian, Polish.

11. Act IV. The swan-maidens form a heart to protect Odette from the storm.

12. Act IV. The black swan-maidens form a cross to protect the lovers from Rothbart.

ferent one in an aside to the audience.

After *Siegfried* has been tricked into betrothal with *Odile*, *Rothbart* and *Odile* laugh mockingly and run towards the steps in a moment of blackout, to be replaced by two owl-like figures (Pl. 9) who run up the steps, threatening any who attempt to follow them, and vanish. Two owls then fly across the sky, while *Odette* weeps by the archway and *Siegfried* dashes through it, to be swallowed up in the blackness of the night.

* * *

Act IV. Same as Act II with the addition of a rock in the centre, from which *Odette* and *Siegfried* later cast themselves into the lake (Pl. 13). In this scene Miss Skeaping has introduced two formations of her own. Just before the storm scene the swan-maidens group themselves about *Odette* in a heart-shaped formation (Pl. 11) to which are attached black " ribbons " suggested by two lines of kneeling swan-maidens in black. Then follows the storm. The lighting is then reduced to a single circle of light centre stage, through which the swan-maidens flow in and out; a little later they are seen in the light of lightning flashes.

When *Rothbart* threatens the lovers, the white swan-maidens run round, and between, the black swan-maidens, who come slowly down-stage *sur les pointes*. The white swan-maidens then form a diagonal line and the black ones form a cross design on another diagonal parallel to the first, and *Rothbart* is driven off (Pl. 12). After the dual suicide of the lovers, *Rothbart* returns and dies on the stage. Miss Skeaping has introduced a new formation for the lovers' suicide. When they are poised on the rock (Pl. 13), the white swan-maidens stand facing them in two parallel diagonal lines, their arms extended in farewell, while in front of them is a line of kneeling black swan-maidens, their arms similarly extended.

There were to have been four *ballerine* taking the role of *Odette-Odile* in turn, but one, Mlle. Raasch, injured her foot and had to rest. At the opening performance the role was given to Mariane Orlando, a young *ballerina* of 18. The next night the star was Gunnel Lindgren and then Elsa-Marianne von Rosen. The production has aroused the greatest interest in Stockholm, each performance being sold out. The press notices have been most favourable, and particular tribute has been paid to the work of the *corps-de-ballet*. It will, I think, be agreed that to rehearse a company unused to full-length classical ballets in a full-length *Swan Lake* and to assist in all the stages of production — all in the space of a few weeks — reflects credit on both the producer and the dancers of the Swedish Ballet.

CYRIL BEAUMONT.

13. Act IV. The lovers together seek release from Rothbart's spell in death.

BALLET IN MAY

Covent Garden

May 2 Mat. Lac (Nerina, Rassine).
May 2 Eve. Lac (Elvin, Field).
May 5 Giselle (Markova, Somes, Lindsay); Veneziana (Elvin, Melvile, Shaw, Jackson).
May 6 Giselle (Shearer, Rassine, Drage); Shadow.
May 7 Lac (Fonteyn, Somes).
May 8 Veneziana, Sylphides (Markova); Tiresias (Elvin, Somes).
May 9 Mat. Lac (Grey, Field).
May 11 Veneziana, Sylphides, Checkmate.
May 14 Lac (Fonteyn, Somes).
May 16 Mat. Lac (Grey, Field).
May 16 Eve. Shadow, Lac, Act II, Ballet Imperial.
May 19 Sleeping Beauty (Elvin, Hart).
May 20 Sleeping Beauty (Grey, Field).
May 22 Sleeping Beauty (Fonteyn, Somes).
May 23 Mat. Sleeping Beauty (Jackson, Somes)
May 28 Sleeping Beauty (Elvin Hart).
May 30 Mat. Sleeping Beauty (Nerina, Rassine).
May 30 Eve. Sleeping Beauty (Fonteyn, Somes).

Sadlers Wells

May 8 Assembly Ball, Rake's Progress, Great Detective.
May 9 Mat. Pastorale, Assembly Ball, Pineapple Poll.
May 11 Coppelia (Fifield, Britton, Poole).
May 14 Fete Etrange, Harlequin in April, Pineapple Poll.
May 16 Mat. Coppelia (Lane, Trecu, Holden).
May 18 Assembly Ball, Harlequin in April, Great Detective.
May 20 Pastorale, Rake's Progress, Pineapple Poll.
May 23 Mat. Coppelia (Lane, Trecu, Holden).
May 26 Fete Etrange, Rake's Progress, Beauty and the Beast, Les Rendezvous.
May 30 Mat. Carnaval, Beauty and the Beast, Pastorale, Great Detective.

MY FAVOURITE ROLE

by Alicia Markova

A BALLERINA'S most famous role is not necessarily always her favourite. But there is no doubt at all that it is in "Giselle" that Alicia Markova is not only best known, but most happy.

She leant forward in her low chair in her sister's Knightsbridge flat, and moved her slim dancer's hands as she spoke. "Yes, yes. Giselle is my favourite role. And I think Giselle is the favourite ballet of many people in many different parts of the world."

She went on quickly, as if she was trying urgently to make me understand. "It is such a simple story, that ordinary, simple people can understand it quite easily. But it is appreciated by the sophisticated, too. For it contains the whole of life, really, doesn't it? That is why it is such a challenge to the dancer . . . not just for the steps, for the *dancing* of it, but because you must express everything in it. There is love, and death, to begin with. And then, after all the pain and agony in the first act, comes the forgiveness and the complete understanding which *is* real love, in the second. It is a story for anybody, anywhere."

As Markova spoke of this romantic ballet which is unique in having been performed continuously for over a hundred years in one State Theatre or another, she seemed to be remembering the many great occasions she had danced the title role since she first performed it with the Diaghalev Company, more than twenty years ago. She looked past me, and past the old prints of ballerinas which hung on the walls between the shelves of ballet books. Her face seemed indeed to have the Mona Lisa smile about which so many writers have gushed. Perhaps she was remembering some of the many different occasions when she had danced the peasant girl Giselle and her tragic story to different audiences — but always to their delight.

She might have been thinking of that time in America, when she was still little known there, and when New York suddenly went mad about her after "Giselle," even though she only danced to the end of the first Act. By some ill-chance, her ankle had broken after she was set down from a high lift by her partner Lifar, and though she danced the whole solo variation—"little hops on point and all, right across the stage on one toe on a fractured foot," as she put it later, finally she collapsed, and Slavenska had to finish for her. Notices next morning acclaimed her prima ballerina, even though the whole of the second act had been danced by somebody else in a different style entirely.

There were Giselles she could remember in draughty halls, one-night stands across the huge Continent, travelling with all the discomforts of wartime. There were countless Giselles with Patrick Dolan (Anton Dolin), the Irishman who was her partner through so many years. There was the time when the excitable, more primitive, Mexican audience almost brought the house down after their first "Giselle" from Markova, for it is their favourite ballet too, not only the dancing, but the graveyard and cross appealing particularly to their highly developed sense of macabre.

She may have been remembering sophisticated audiences in Monte Carlo, stolid ones in provincial towns in Britain and Canada. Or perhaps she was thinking of that first Giselle for the then young Sadler's Wells Company in 1934, when she created the title role in the first all-British production and when, at its end, her old teacher Marie Rambert came behind the scenes, took Alicia's face between her hands, kissed her and murmured: "My dear, you have come of age."

Anyway, she broke the silence by speaking of the past.

"The first time I saw Giselle was

"He loves me . . ." (*Houston Rogers*)

when I was about eight," she said quietly. "Arnold Haskell's mother took me to see Pavlova dance it. But I am sorry to say I cannot remember very much about it, nothing at *all* about the first act. But I remember realising how Pavlova was telling Albrecht all the time to go to the cross, not to leave the cross. I remember, even as a small child, feeling the insistence on that in her dancing. But I don't remember the actual steps at all."

Markova described Pavlova's costume for that production—not a tutu, but a "modern" idea, chiffon drapery. "I have that costume in my collection now," she said. It was later, when Spessiva danced Giselle for the Camargo Society, and later still, when Ninette de Valois produced Markova at Sadler's Wells Company that the short tutu, as in the original production, was insisted on.

I asked Markova how her conception of the role of Giselle had changed through the years—if she had ever reached a point where she felt that it was complete, and need not be altered.

"I think you always have to keep changing if you are a dancer," she explained. "If you stopped at one point, it would, surely, soon seem old-fashioned, for as the years pass so does the mood of the world. In fact, you have to adapt yourself each performance to the mood of your partner, of the audience, of the orchestra, of the theatre, of the city and the country you are in. In Mexico, in New York, in London, Manchester or Edinburgh, always Giselle is a *little* different, even though the main character is the same, a peasant girl, absolutely in love, and later a spirit who has been through love and has learnt absolute understanding."

(*Houston Rogers*)

Markova insists that throughout her performances for years, the *steps*, however, have remained exactly the same. She sticks faithfully to the original choreography.

"Somebody mentioned 'devices' in an article recently—but each one mentioned was not a 'device' but part of the original choreography. It is the mood that I change again and again."

But though in New York, for instance, there is a more modern feeling, the production less gentle than at Covent Garden; though her present New York partner Yorhikoviz produces a slightly different Giselle, different from the one who danced with Dolin, yet the main character is always the same, utterly simple.

It is this simplicity, Markova says, which helps to make Giselle as a role such a challenge. "When I was very young, and began to dance Giselle, I used not to understand when old people told me that I was doing things too fussily—that they had seen somebody else do it, some great dancer, and she had been different. I could not understand, because you only learn to eliminate when you have reached maturity, then only do you realise what does not matter, what doesn't really mean anything

(*continued p. 21*)

(*Houston Rogers*)

THE CHINESE THEATRE

I

THE Chinese theatre has from time immemorial played a tremendous part in the life of the Chinese people, but, like their art—indeed, like all things Chinese—it is so different from anything with which we are familiar in the West that few foreigners deemed it to be worthy of their attention.

In Europe, drama, opera and ballet are regarded as three separate arts. In China they are fused into one art in which, as in the sister arts of calligraphy and painting, the aim is, by invocation and suggestion, to stimulate the imagination of performers and audience alike instead of deadening it as we do in the West with our obsession for realistic representation.

It is not surprising that the uninitiated foreigner, when he sees a Chinese drama-opera-ballet all in one, has not the faintest idea what is happening on the stage. There is no scenery and no stage fittings to create the illusion of reality. There is nothing on the stage but a table and a chair or two. If an actor jumps on to a chair, jumps down the other side and then runs off the stage, the audience knows he has committed suicide by jumping down a well. A chair placed on top of a table may serve, as the context requires, as an Emperor's Throne, the seat of judgment or a hilltop from which a General surveys his troops. A riding whip represents a horse, an oar a boat, a flag an army, a chair a bridge or mountain.

The costumes of the actors make up, in western eyes, for the bareness of the stage. Officials, couriers, merchants, monks and nuns wear appropriate garments, but much more elaborate than those worn in real life and the chairs and table on the stage are draped with embroideries which are changed to match the actors' clothing. A good official wears a square hat, a scoundrel wears a round hat and a villain is also indicated by a white patch on his nose. A face painted red indicates a great Emperor or some other sacred personage. A black face represents an honest but uncouth individual, a white face a cunning but dignified individual. Devils have green faces, Gods and Goddesses gold or yellow faces. A warrior wears a hat adorned with two pheasant feathers six feet long; if he is a high military officer he wears four feathers. Stage fighting is a combination of dancing and acrobatics, very like our western ballet. When two warriors, with their feather headdresses, their painted faces and richly embroidered gowns studded with little mirrors, whirl about the stage with lightning speed, to the accompaniment of crashing orchestral pandemonium, it makes a truly exciting spectacle of which, according to Mr. Zucker, even an untrained westerner can feel the thrill.

It is a common source of amusement to Europeans, says Sir Reginald Johnstone, to see an attendant step forward to adjust an actor's robe or to hand a cup of tea to a bearded, eye rolling hero, who has just emerged from a whirlwind of emotional excitement and whose parched throat is in need of soothing syrup. Still quainter is the sight of a dead man getting up and walking off the stage — perhaps even lending a hand in bearing away his own corpse. When a character is beheaded he falls to the ground for a moment, then rises and runs off the stage; and presently an attendant produces a bundle shaped like a head wrapped in a red cloth and displays it to the audience.

(Musee Guimet, Paris)

Dancer of the T'ang Dynasty. The long sleeves add grace to the dance, which was the main feature of the drama at this period (A.D. 618-908).

Boating scenes, as Mr. Jack Chen tells us, provide delightful interludes for choreographic pantomime. In one such scene, described by Arlington, the boat is represented by an old man with a pole and a boatman with an oar who stand or walk at a fixed distance from each other. When the boat cannot be brought close to the bank because of the mud the boatman wipes the muddy end of the pole and holds it out to the old man. He declines to touch it until it is wiped clean and insists on having the clean end. He then balances himself on the rocking boat, totters, hesitates and finally makes a huge stride which just lands him on the bank and nearly upsets the boat with all on board. The audience hold their breath. They *see* the boat, the bank, the mud and the river, and a great sigh of relief goes up when the old man at last is safe on shore.

The artistic triumphs of the Chinese drama - opera - ballet are achieved with the aid of elaborate rules and conventions which transport both actors and audience to the realm of the imagination. There are, for example, 20 different kinds of laughter and 250 styles of face painting, each with a symbolic meaning of its own. There are fifty movements of the hands and fifty manipulations of the sleeve—the beautiful loose sleeve of a Chinese robe — as rigidly prescribed as the steps of a classical ballerina. When about to climb stairs a gentleman gives a rapid twirl to one of his long sleeves so that his hand will be free to clutch the railing; a lady twists her sleeve round the right wrist and picks up her skirt with the left hand. Deliberately lifting a foot indicates stepping over a threshold. Bringing the hands close together in front indicates closing a door. To open it each hand mimes pulling the upper and the lower bolt aside simultaneously; then leaning forward, the actor peeps from side to side. The whole fabric of the door is conjured before our eyes.

In the Shih Ching, or Book of Poetry, Confucius has preserved the ancient religious odes, love songs and folk songs of the Chinese people. These show that at the very dawn of history seasonal festivals, which have the appearance of festivals of youth, were held in country places near a mountain or beside a river. The attendance was large and many ceremonies were performed, but contests of dance and song between the young people of different villages formed an

essential feature of the gathering. Boys and girls are formed up in two opposite lines and, as they advance towards each other, the two choruses engage in a tourney of dance and song —a rhythmic contest in which alternations of mimic improvisations are repeated and, with the aid of song and such gestures as accompany a figure in a ballet, the opposing lines of actors express their sentiments.

In the second millenium before the Christian Era there were *wu* and *hsien* —soothsayers, rainmakers, witchdoctors of both sexes — whose dancing and spell chanting is also one of the sources of the Chinese drama. Later we hear of jugglers, clowns and acrobats and of strolling players, some of whom attained positions of wealth and honour. During the first century of our era we hear for the first time of players who acted stories and of Palace singers who performed military dances accompanied by song; and later still, during the short reign of the Sui Dynasty (A.D. 580 to 618) there were performances of dramatised stories accompanied by song and dance.

The Sui was the precursor of the glories of the T'ang (A.D. 618 to 906) when Chinese civilisation reached its zenith. Scholars, artists, poets and musicians flocked from many countries to the Court of the T'ang Emperor at Ch'ang An; music, painting and calligraphy were raised to the highest levels and the art of the theatre developed into the drama-opera-ballet of the present day. The patron Deity of actors is the T'ang Emperor Ming Huang for, according to one of the most famous of Chinese legends, the theatre owes its origin to Ming Huang's visit to the Palace in the Moon. He was conducted to the moon by a magician who threw his staff into the air and changed it into a dazzling bridge over which they crossed. Ming Huang was led through haze and mist to a vast Imperial Palace, dazzling and precipitous, where he saw a score of maidens, clad in the Rainbow Skirt and Feather Jacket, dancing the phoenix dance to the strains of pellucid music under a cinnamon tree. When the Emperor returned to his own abode he founded an Academy known as the Pear Garden Performers where young men and maidens were trained in the arts of music and dancing. Actors today are known as Disciples of the Pear Garden.

J. T. PRATT.

(To be continued.)

The Emperor Ming Huang, A.D. 685-762, paying a visit to the Palace of the Moon. Painted in the year 1446 by Ch'iu Ying.

Walter Crisham standing by the Toulouse-Lautrec poste depicting Valentin Desosse (Boneless Valentine) the famou dancer of the Moulin Rouge, whose role he plays, ar Katherine Kath as La Goulue, in a dress copied from the poster.

MOULIN ROUGE

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC was an artist, and his genius was expressed in a static medium. Yet you come away from the film of his life, "Moulin Rouge," feelnng you have seen the work of a man whose art was expressed through the pattern of movement. The dancers and the dances he immortalised are the scenes you remember, and it is through these sequences that his work comes vividly to life.

Lautrec was born in Provence in November, 1864. But the inspiration that gave birth to his work was drawn, not from the light and warmth of the hot Midi sunshine, but from the bawdy, colourful world of Montmartre at night. It is impossible to think of Lautrec away from these surroundings. Director John Huston was therefore right to storm our senses so boldly in the opening scenes of his film "Moulin Rouge." It was from scenes such as these that came the posters, the drawings, the paintings, and the lithographs that have made Toulouse-Lautrec famous.

The film plunges straight into a night at the Moulin Rouge. In the flickering light and smoky air, the music shrieks, the crowds shout, and excitement reaches fever point. It is noisy, crude, colourful and explosive. And then come the dancers. The Can-Can that is danced now at the Moulin Rouge may be a shadowy imitation of the ferocious dance of the 1890s. But the Can-Can that Huston gives us is no such carbon copy. The dance sequences are probably the finest in the film. They succeed in bringing to life the very essence of Lautrec's work. His characters whirl before us, and it is as if Lautrec himself had burned the colours of his palette deep on the celluloid, biting yellows, blues, and that strange, fierce green that shadowed so much of his work. Here is La Goulue, hideously ugly, magnificently vulgar; Valentin of the cragged profile and pointed shoes; Chocolat; and the cancannières themselves, flinging up a foam of lace like waves breaking white on a sea of colour.

William Chappell, who directed the dances, spent a considerable time in Paris researching into the arrangement of both the Can-Can and the Quadrille, as they were presented in the heyday of the Moulin Rouge.

The Quadrille, not as well known as the Can-Can, depended on the brilliance of the four solo dancers. It was fiercely competitive, each dancer trying to win the most applause, and brawling and cat-fights were not uncommon. The dance followed no set routine, but depended on acrobatic virtuosity. Katherine Kath excels as La Goulue, and she is partnered by Walter Crisham as Valentin, with Muriel Smith and Tutte Lemkow as the other two soloists. I suspect that much of their dancing was extemporaneous. It certainly seemed spontaneous in its hysteria, ferocity and brilliance.

Through the heat of this drunken, heady atmosphere, we watch the patient hand of Lautrec at work, putting down on paper all that he sees, making caricatures out of characters, in a biting and satirical comment on Paris at the turn of the century.

All this is good, but when the story of Lautrec's life begins to unfold, much that is banal and cheap intrudes. It is a pity that Huston chose to base his film on a rather trashy novel containing only an element of the real truth. And even this novel is distorted for box-office reasons. We have Lautrec first seeking love from a trollop, and failing; then spurning love from a model, and dying. The one significant thing in his life is forgotten; that he was an artist and an aristocrat, and would never have abandoned his painting to

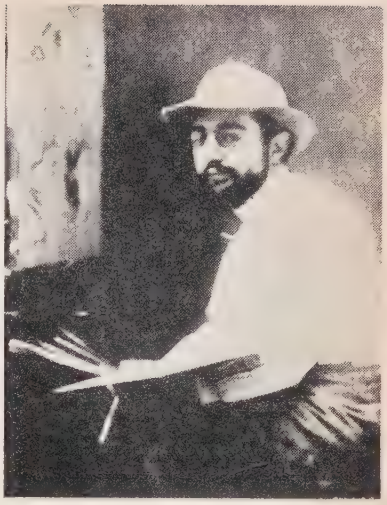
whine for the favours of a street-girl. Colette Marchand, the famous French ballerina, as the girl, Marie Charlet, acts with a vitality that is refreshing. Intelligent acting comes also from Suzanne Flon, as Myriame, the beautiful model from Paquin, and the second girl in his life. She has a great deal of quiet charm, and I enjoyed watching her, though she bore little resemblance to the real Myriame Hayem, rich mistress of many men, who was reputed to have the profile of a goat.

But even the Lautrec of José Ferrer was vastly different in character from the real Lautrec (the physical resemblance was startling). Lautrec was a supreme egoist, and always surrounded by friends. He was the only son of the Comte de Toulouse-Lautrec, the eccentric nobleman who washed his socks in the gutter, and milked his mare in the Bois when he felt thirsty. I am sorry we did not see more of Lautrec the father. José Ferrer, despite the handicap of struggling along on his knees to dwarf his height, gives a technically brilliant performance which never quite succeeds in touching the heart. It is unfortunate he was hampered by such bad dialogue.

But all these flaws pale into unimportance when one thinks of the magnificent, almost inspired, sense of colour and composition throughout the film. The bold massing of figures was breath-taking, and there was one memorable montage sequence where photographs of Lautrec's actual sketches are brought to life by flicking them across the screen rather like the animated cartoon books of our childhood. Eliot Elisofan as Special Colour Consultant has done a fine job of work. So too has Paul Sheriff as Art Director, and Oswald Morris as Director of Photography.

As a record of the life of a crippled dwarf, called Toulouse-Lautrec, then "Moulin Rouge" is disappointing. But as a tribute to the brilliance of the painter, Toulouse-Lautrec, then the film succeeds admirably. Perhaps there is a kind of analogy here. We remember Lautrec for his genius, not for the fact that he had a maimed and twisted body. We shall remember the film "Moulin Rouge" for the skill and sympathy with which it presented this genius, not for the film-star story which accompanied it.

ANNE DEVESON.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. A contemporary photograph. Jose Ferrer plays the role in the film.

Next month

Interview with Margot Fonteyn
Chinese Theatre II
Coronations and the Ballet

The can-can girls.

BALLET ROUND THE WORLD

Paris

L'Association Parisienne des Amis de la Danse, at its fifth annual Gala at the Champs Elysées Theatre, presented works by several young choreographers. A ballet by Michael Pares of the Opera to Honegger's *Pacific 231*, with a highly original décor by the choreographer, was especially noteworthy. The music is a picture in sound of a locomotive, but the choreographer has left realism aside to create an abstract study of speed. Michael Descombey, also of the Opera, presented *Frères Humains*, a short ballet on the lynching of a Negro unjustly accused of having violated a white girl. The idea of forgiveness in death which reconciles the two races, the linear simplicity of the movement, the action which develops out of it, seem to promise much for the future of the young choregrapher.

Finally Francoise Adret presented a new version of Stravinsky's *Apollo Musagetes*. When *Apollo*, son of *Lete*, is born at Delos, he makes his way to Olympus to be bidden by Zeus to guide the Muses—and he is still among us today. In the theatre, where the Muses are always to be found in the form of three young persons, the god takes command and leads them in the dance. Youli Algaroff of the Opera, Ethery Pagava and Marguerite Golon, soloist of the Amsterdam Opera, interpreted this new *Apollo*, which has very good moments and is well-balanced and thought out.

Yvette Chauvire, who is due to reappear as guest artist at the Opera, took part in a performance given by the Jeunesses Musicales at the Champs Elysées Theatre, when she danced a new work of Serge Lifar on Bach's *Suite in D* containing an austere *grande variation* of pure clean and poetic lines. The choreographer wished to prove that it was possible to dance to a Bach score without sacrificing either its spirit or its tempo, and in place of an orchestra the music was supplied by a long-playing gramophone record.

Cannes

The Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas has just presented at the Cannes Casino *L'Aigrette*, a new ballet in one act with scenario by Princess Bibesco, music by Prince Chavchavadze, décor and costumes by Rina Rosselli. As in *La Sylphide* of Taglioni, the heroine of *L'Aigrette* is an immortal spirit, a wraith, a fantastic bird loved by a young fisherman who tries to capture it and dies in the attempt. The score of *L'Aigrette* is good ballet music and is rich in rhythm, movements and colours. The choreographer is Birger Bartolin who is Danish; Rosella Hightower and Vladimir Skouratoff danced the principal roles in this new ballet which achieves an élan suggesting the flight of the fantastic *Aigrette* towards the sky and the light.

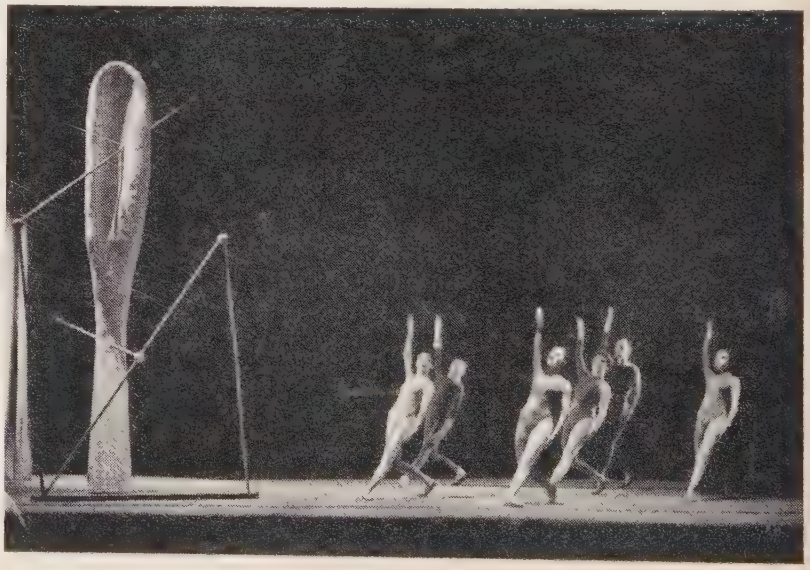
Rome

The Rome Opera has just presented three new ballets—*Bulle de Savon* (Soap-bubble), on a fantasy composed by F. Casavola, décors and costumes by Enrico Prampolini. In this ballet the dancers personify numbers and groups of numbers corresponding to different orchestral colourings. The choreographer, Guglielmo Morresi, has effectively rendered abstract designs of lines and spirals, the shifting patterns appearing as on a blackboard. Attilia Radice and Guido Lauri appeared in this ballet. Attilia Radice is also the choreographer of *La Tarentule* (The Tarantula), based on the legend according to which the bite of the tarantula causes a dancing-madness, and the composer is Giuseppe Piccioli. This energetic ballet was well danced by Mlles. Matteini and Podelvento. The young members of the theatre school also gave a little ballet taken from Dostoevski's novel *A Winter's Tale*, with music by Renzo Rossellini and choreography by Teresa Battaggi, ballet mistress of the theatre.

Turin

The Turin ballet group, directed by Susanna Egri, has presented a remarkable programme at the Alfieri Theatre. The modern ideas of this dancer-choreographer, who has however a firm academic foundation, were manifested in *Instantanées* to new music by the Hungarian composer Paul Arma. There are three movements. The first is a study in abstract design; in the second we are shown the spiritual states of man when face to face with himself in solitude; and the third shows him in company with his fellows, in progressive dance and rhythm. This ambitious composition was interpreted by Susanna and Marta Egri, Riri Pastore, David Kerval, Alberto Testa and others. Other compositions—a *pas de trois* to music by Pergolesi and *Choix Difficile* in a modern idiom—showed the high ideals of this group.

FERDINAND REYNA.



(*Moisio, Turin*)

The Turin Ballet Group in "Instantanees," choreographer Susanna Egri, music by Paul Arna.

Luciana Novaro in " Catulli Carmina," cantata-ballet by Karl Orff, recently given at La Scala, Milan.

(*Erio Piccagliani*)

New York

The New York City Ballet brought its 1952-53 season to a close with a series of small ballets. In *Valse-Fantasie,* set to Glinka's music of the same name, Balanchine has choreographed a series of fluid variations as solos and in groups of twos, threes and fours. Karinska has dressed DIANA ADAMS, TANQUIL LECLERQ, MELISSA HAYDEN and NICHOLAS MAGALLANES in Romantic period costumes. A man of Balanchine's genius can seldom be dull therefore the dances for the girls and their cavalier are charming yet the ballet suffers from lack of any choreographic climax. It simply spins itself out and disappears.

Will o' the Wisp has choreography by RUTHANNA BORIS, music by VIRGIL THOMSON, scenery and costumes by DOROTHEA TANNING. Miss Boris inherited all these from last year's failure, *Bayou* (choreography, Balanchine), which may partly account for her difficulties. The setting is a deserted glade with a swimming pool deep in the bayou country. The plot is suggested by four lines of Emily Dickinson, about a boy who has fallen asleep while his companions disport themselves in the swimming pool. He awakes after their departure and is lured to his doom by the spirits of the water. His companions return and find only his jacket. *Will o' the Wisp* has all the literary interest of a successful 19th century Romantic ballet. It has failed, not because of music, setting or story or because Miss Boris (who dances the role of leader of the spirits) is lacking in technique or personality, but through a weak male lead and a lack of strong choreography. In the role of the young boy FRANK HOBI is given no scope and is no more than an obedient partner.

WILLIAM DOLLAR'S *Five Gifts,* set to Dohnany's *Variations on a Nursery Tune,* is based on MARK TWAIN'S story *The Five Boons of Life.* The costumes are by ESTEBAN FRANCES. A *Fairy* comes to a *Youth* with five gifts, of which only one is of value, *Death.* After choosing unwisely four times, he asks for the valuable gift, only to find that it has been given to another. The *Fairy* rewards him with the wanton insult of *Old Age.*

We have seen a longer version of this ballet called, I believe, *The Five Boons,* set by Dollar for a small concert group which included TODD BOLENDER and MARY JANE SHEA. The ballet was also set for the Marquis de Cuevas Company some years ago with EGLEVSKY in the role of the *Youth.* Todd Bolender in the same role gives what must be one of the finest performances of his career, and Jillana, Melissa Hayden, Patricia Wilde, Irene Larsen and Carolyn George are fine. With a great deal more work and the removal of one or two choreographic kinks, the New York City Ballet will have a piece of real repertoire in *The Five Gifts.*

HOPE SHERIDAN.

Cape Town

Although DAVID POOLE is now in London as one of the leading dancers at Sadler's Wells Theatre, an inspired performance has been given by the UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN BALLET COMPANY — of which he is a prominent member—at the Town Hall in Stellenbosch this month, under the direction of DULCIE HOWES.

The audience enjoyed the same programme as that given in Cape Town last December, but with JOHAN FLOREES and BART SAAYMAN dancing DAVID POOLE'S parts while he is overseas.

(*continued p. 22*)

BALLET RECORDS OF THE MONTH

GAIETE PARISIENNE (Offenbach, orch. Rosenthal). *Boston Promenade Orchestra conducted by* ARTHUR FIEDLER. (H.M.V. CLP.1004.)

This new long-playing record is of the complete score of the ballet as performed by the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo. It is a spirited recording of the delicious tunes of Offenbach to which Massine devised the ballet of the dainty Glove-Seller, the flirtatious Baron and the Peruvian with the carpet-bags. All who have seen Massine in the role of the Peruvian, whether on stage or film, will enjoy this record, for it brings him and the other characters vividly before the mind's eye.

THE FIREBIRD — SUITE (Stravinski). *New Augmented Version. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by the composer.* (COL. 33C1010.)

A disappointing recording, the more so that it is directed by the composer himself. The reproduction in general is poor, the orchestral colouring being dulled by an over-all hollowness that destroys the delicate effect of this magical score.

NEWS

NEW BALLET CRITIC FOR ROME

Rome's leading daily newspaper, *Il Tempo*, has for the first time instituted a regular ballet column, entrusting it to SIGNOR CARANDENTE, a young member of the staff of the Institute of Fine Arts.

BALANCHINE IN MILAN

GEORGES BALANCHINE and his wife, TANAQUIL LECLERCQ have gone to Milan, where Balanchine will stage Monteverde's opera *L'Incoronazione di Poppæa* and the ballet *Baiser de la Fée* at La Scala.

VISIT BY ULANOVA?

There is a possibility that the great Soviet ballerina, GALINA ULANOVA, may visit London as a guest artist of Sadlers Wells Ballet, either before or after the company's American tour next autumn, to dance in *Swan Lake* or another full-length classic.

VIOLETTA ELVIN'S PORTRAIT

VIOLETTA ELVIN has had her portrait painted by Mr. K. MCKEE, father of Fiorella Keane, another member of the Sadlers Wells Ballet.

AMERICAN NATIONAL BALLET THEATRE'S TOUR

The AMERICAN NATIONAL BALLET THEATRE have been on tour, and given 197 performances in 94 cities in the U.S. and Canada. ("Try that on your Sadlers Wells hat!" challenges a correspondent.) They are now starting on a tour of Europe and will be the first American ballet company to appear in the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, where they open on May 4th. They will be in Edinburgh for the first week of the Festival where their repertoire will include *Constantia, The Thief who loved a Ghost, Rodeo, Billy the Kid, Schumann Concerto, Graduation Ball* and the *Black Swan Pas de Deux*. The company will be headed by ALICIA ALONSO, IGOR YOUSKEVITCH, JOHN KRIZA and MARY ELLEN MOYLAN.

KARL ORFF CANTATA-BALLETS AT LA SCALA

A performance was given recently at the Scala, Milan, of the triptych of cantata-ballets *Carmina Burana, Catulli Carmina*, and *The Triumph of Aphrodite*, by the German composer KARL ORFF. The solo singers were ELIZABETH SCHWARZKOPF and NICOLAI GEDDA and the dancers LUCIANA NOVARO and UGO DELL'ARA. The choreographer was TITANIA GSOVSKI.

BALLETS BASQUES IN PARIS

The BALLETS BASQUES OF OLDANA opened at the Empire Theatre, Paris, as the dancers from Bali completed their season at the Marigny Theatre. The Basque Company takes its name from the village in the Pyrenees where it was formed. It possesses a well-balanced vocal ensemble, and presents folk songs and dances with picturesque and colourful costumes and scenery.

TYNESIDE BALLET WORKSHOP

We hear that a new society, TYNESIDE BALLET WORKSHOP, has just been formed by a group of dancers at Newcastle. JOHN CRANKO is the President. The first public performances will be given at the Little Theatre, Gateshead, in the week beginning June 8th and the repertoire will include *Hansel and Gretel* (choreographer VICKI HILL) and *Edwardian Scrapbook* (choreographers MARGARET AARSTAD and JOHN PURVES). In addition to rehearsals, the group meets on Tuesday evenings for members' practice classes. Enquiries to the Secretary 53 Mitchell Avenue, Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2.

PAULINE GRANT FOR GLYNDEBOURNE

PAULINE GRANT is again to be choreographer for the Glyndebourne Festival this year.. Two works not previously seen at Glyndebourne will be produced—Gluck's *Alceste* and the fully operatic version of Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, presented in the original version by Glyndebourne at the 1950 Edinburgh Festival. This year, Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* will be produced by this company at the Edinburgh Festival for the first time on the stage in Great Britain.

A STUDENT FROM SOUTH AFRICA

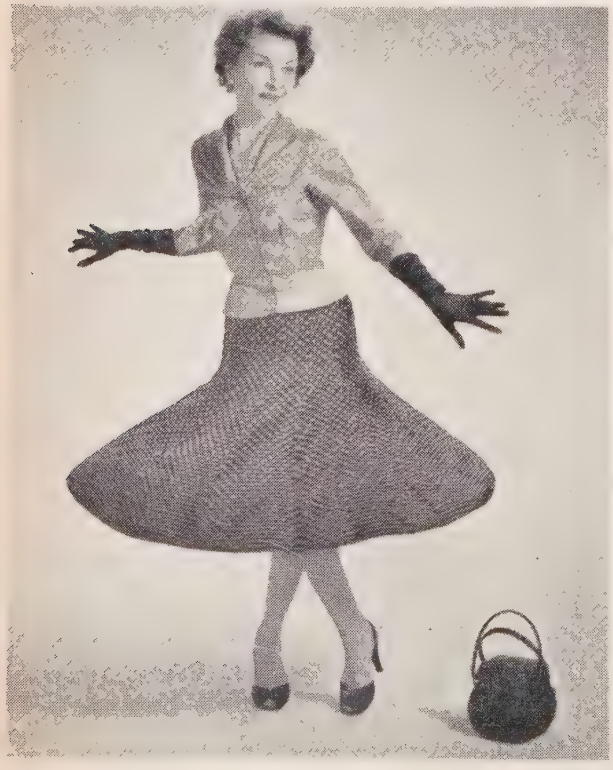
A 17-year-old ballet dancer, ANNE SOUTHWOOD, is coming to London this summer to put in several years' study. In 1952 she won the Gold Championship Cup and £100 bursary prize presented by the Western Union Teachers' Association to enable promising dancers to study overseas. She is at present dancing in Capetown with the Union Ballet Company.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BALLET SEASON

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL THEATRE COMPANY opened its 1953 season in Melbourne in February with Fokine's *Carnaval*, an abstract ballet *Caprice* by Valrene Tweedie to music by Prokofiev, *Aurora's Wedding* and a reproduction of the famous *Pas de Quatre*.

FOLK SONG AND DANCE FESTIVAL IN PEKING

For the first time in history folk singers and dancers from all over



Colette Marchand, the distinguished French ballerina, who has won laurels for her acting opposite Jose Ferrer in "Moulin Rouge" and for her brilliant performance as the film-star in Roland Petit's satiric new ballet "Cine-Bijou."

During her recent visit to Stockholm, where she danced Odette-Odile in "Swan Lake," Beryl Grey was photographed with Swedish ballerine Gunnel Lindgren, Mariane Orlando and Elsa-Marianne von Rosen.

(*Merkel Rydberg, Stockholm*)

China have been gathered in Peking for a Folk Song and Dance Festival. As part of the present revival of traditional song and dance, performances have been given in 20 cities during the last few months, in some cases for the first time for generations.

BODENWEISER BALLET TOURS

The Bodenweiser Ballet, having returned home to Australia from India, is about to set out again on a tour of New South Wales before going to Japan.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET TOURS THE CONTINENT

The Sadlers Wells Theatre Ballet left on April 5th for a tour of Holland, Belgium and Germany, and will be away until May 4th. Their repertoire for the tour includes such favourites as *The Rake's Progress, Pineapple Poll* and *Assembly Ball.*

ARNOLD HASKELL'S LECTURE-TOUR

The British Ballet exhibition organised by the British Council is touring Greece and Yugoslavia. It consists of model stage sets, original costume and stage designs, photographs, and some 150 books, periodicals, musical scores and gramophone records. Arnold Haskell, Director of Sadler's Wells School, is lecturing on British Ballet in both countries.

OTTAWA CLASSICAL BALLET

The Ottawa Classical Ballet, directed by Nesta Toumine, has formed a travelling group of 15 dancers. Their first out-of-town engagement was at Deep River, Ontario, which met with so cordial a reception that more travelling is being planned. The programme included Act II of *Coppelia, Les Valses, Mozartiana* and *Divertissement.* The Company has branch schools at Deep River and at Rockcliffe and Westboro' near Ottawa.

MY FAVOURITE ROLE: By ALICIA MARKOVA (contd).

and can be dropped. Only experience can teach you, nobody on earth can tell you, as you won't know what they mean—and you can't tell either how much the role they have watched so often means to them. Giselle is such a tragedy that it needs no frills. The tragedy is a shock to you, and to the audience, and you must not obscure it."

Before a performance of Giselle, Markova always tries to be entirely free of engagements not only that day, but the night before . . . and the evening after. "I like to come fresh to it. I try to keep the world away, and not clutter up my mind with worrying things. I don't know how I shall dance until I get on to the stage and begin."

Markova, on the day of a big performance of Giselle, is often in the theatre by mid-afternoon, cutting herself off from the ordinary world on purpose. Her dressing room is as tidy and antiseptic as a doctor's surgery. Her make-up, on her dressing table, is covered with a pure white towel; her tutus hang up, inside out, always newly cleaned, for she never wears one twice; her shoes, white, stand in rows, long and narrow. Often she stays there alone, thinking, or just waiting for the part to take hold of her.

Some time before the rest of the company begin to arrive she is practising behind the scenes, getting herself into that sweat which remains with her until she stands before the curtain for the final call. Hours before the curtain rises she is already at work at the long process of becoming Giselle.

Though it is her favourite ballet, Markova believes that Giselle is definitely the most exacting of all roles. "You have to give everything at the end of the second act—you work up to a tremendous climax in that scene, and then at the end you will have completely exhausted yourself if you have danced properly." During the interval, she explains, there is not time for a rest. Giselle has to change from top to toe while the audience is having whiskies and sodas in the Crush Bar. "When you appear again, you have not only to *look* completely different, but *be* completely different. When you finish the first act, you have been stark, staring mad. Now you must be a spirit, very composed, very serene."

She gave a little laugh as she moved a newspaper on the table beside her. "People sometimes write that I look as if I don't touch the ground in the second act. But I assure you, it requires the most tremendous physical strength for that. It is an illusion—achieved with strength."

The First Act demands everything a dancer can give in the way of dancing, emotion, skill. There is no let-up in the second, the technical skill required is supremely demanding. "'Spent,' I think, is the right word. Yes, spent—that is how you are at the end of Giselle. You have been through every human emotion, if you have danced it right. You have given every single thing you have."

Before I left, I asked Alicia Mar-

(*continued p. 22*)

THE BLACK SWAN

TO have watched the flat version of a three dimensional film on the night that Hollywood's first full-length 3-D film had its British première, might seem a little retrogressive. But this particular film "The Black Swan," was specially prepared, and was included in a programme of International Dance Films given by the London Ballet Circle at the Imperial Institute, Kensington, on March 19th. This was the "left-eyed" camera at work.

In its original 3-D form, "The Black Swan" was first shown at the South Bank. Later it toured Europe and America. Based on the famous Pas de Deux from Act III of "Le Lac des Cygnes" (Petipa Ivanov), Beryl Grey dances as Odile, and John Field as Siegfried. Criticism of the filming was easier on the flat version, and I missed the depth and a little of the excitement of the 3-D form, but as Peter Brinson (choreographic script writer) said just before the film was presented, this version was in the nature of an experiment, and the object was equally to help study the difficulties in filming dancing, as for the dancing itself. The particular camera used precluded all long takes, and this was reflected to a certain extent in the film. It was a little annoying to have the sequence of the dancing broken so often.

Act III of The Swan Lake seems ideally suited for the film medium. It depends a great deal upon the virtuosity and technical brillance of Odile, and close-up shots of the camera can bring this out. Close-ups can also show the cruelty and arrogance mirrored in Odile's face, although in the case of Beryl Grey this sometimes came dangerously near to archness. Another significant point where the camera helps is in the vision of Odette, always difficult to stage convincingly.

If you have a chance of seeing a revival of "The Black Swan," it is well worth while. Even the person who is not a great ballet fan should find it enjoyable.

ANNE DEVESON.

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MY FAVOURITE ROLE: BY ALICIA MARKOVA (contd).

kova one more question. Had she danced *one* particular Giselle which she could pick out and point to as an occasion when she felt everything had been perfect—her own personal satisfaction over her own performance, the audience, the "feel" of the house, the orchestra, everything? She hesitated a moment. "Yes," she said finally. "Yes, just once. I think the first performance of Giselle this Season at the Royal Opera House."

Looking back on that February evening when the discerning London audience welcomed back as "guest artist" the English girl who had created Giselle for their own British company, there was for them, too, something "special" that night, an emotion, a rightness you could feel through the tremendous ovation.

Interview by

BARBARA WACE.

NEWS—CAPE TOWN (*contd.*)

The two outstanding ballets of the evening were JOHN CRANKO'S *Beauty and the Beast* to the music of RAVEL, with MAVIS MAASTRICHT a light and graceful *Beauty* and BART SAAYMAN admirably taking the part of the *Beast*. The first production of this ballet was danced in London by DAVID POOLE and PATRICIA MILLER.

As popular though entirely different was Cranko's *Sea Change*, with music by SIBELIUS and original décor by JOHN PIPER.

This ballet was a colourful and tragic theme of fishermen lost at sea and their womenfolk mourning on the port. An outstanding performance was given by JASMINE HONORE in her dramatic part of wife to the young fisherman. All the dancers in this ballet gave an admirably finished and well co-ordinated performance — specially the womenfolk portraying a vivid impression of frenzied grief.

Other ballets were *Les Rendezvous* and *Casse Noisette*, both danced with finish and sparkle. Pamela Chrimes as *Sugar Plum Fairy* was a will o' the wisp of lightness and grace, specially noticeable in her Pas de Deux partnered by JOHAN FLOREES.

The clever décor of GILL PARKER, the many beautiful costumes and the music played by the Cape Town Orchestra, added triumph to a brilliant evening.

LEAH LOURIE.

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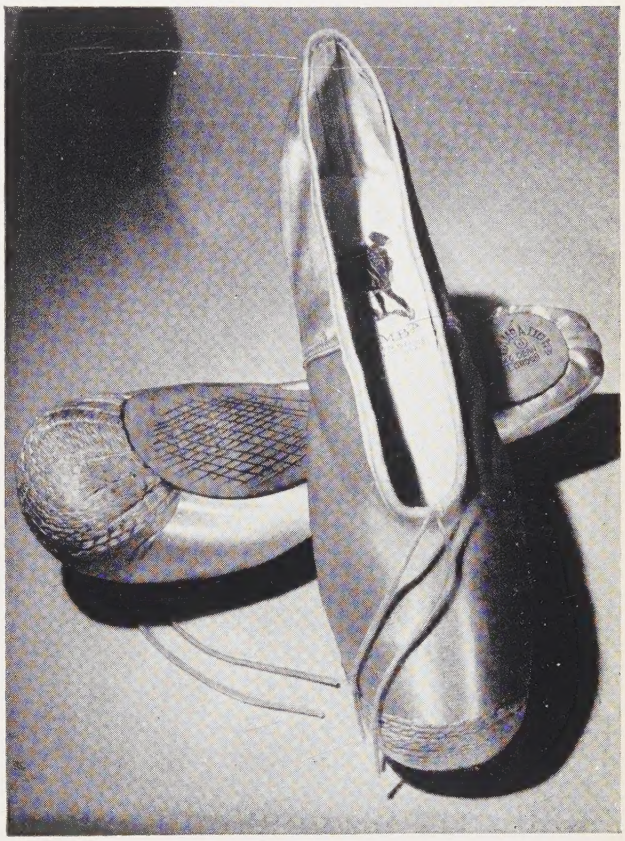

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Claire Sombert, winner of the 1952 Rene Blum prize, founded by Cyril Beaumont and the Association des Ecrivains et Critiques de la Danse, and awarded annually by the Association.